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Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-01

INR-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 /035 W
---------- 023089
R 060745Z JUL 76
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0084
INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 7985

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR
SUBJECT: TECHNIQUES FOR DEALING WITH EPMG

THIS IS A TWIST ON THE TRADITIONAL "AS I LEAVE MY POST"
MESSAGE. OMITTING MOST BACKGROUND FACTS AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS,
IT SUGGESTS SOME TECHNIQUES FOR DEALING WITH THIS DIFFICULT GOVERN-
MENT. CHANGES IN STYLE OR STRUCTURE OF EPMG COULD QUICKLY MAKE
SUCH ADVICE OBSOLETE, BUT IT MAY BE USEFUL TO DEPT SO LONG AS
CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES CONTINUE.

1. ALTHOUGH NOT WRITTEN INTO ANY WEASHINGTON-APPROVED DOCUMENT,
I BELIEVE THAT NAME OF THE GAME HERE IS TO LIMIT DAMAGE TO
U.S. INTERESTS, AND TO MAINTAIN AS MUCH STEADINESS AS POSSIBLE
IN U.S. POLICY AND PROGRAMS.

2. WE HAVE SEEN THAT LOWER-LEVEL EPMG DECISIONS ADVERSE TO U.S.
PROGRAMS CAN SOMETIMES BE REVERSED WHEN BROUGHT FORCEFULLY TO
HIGHER-LEVEL ATTENTION IN THE EPMG.

3. IN THE PAST THE EMBASSY (INCLUDING MYSELF) SOMETIMES SURMISED
WRONGLY THAT ADVERSE EPMG ACTIONS ARE RESULT OF CONSIDERED POLICY
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DECISIONS BY DIRG. IT IS INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT DISORGANIZED HIGHER

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LEVEL DECISION-MAKERS ARE OFTEN UNAWARE OF ACTIONS TAKEN, AND/OR
ARE TOO BUSY AND TOO IGNORANT TO CONSIDER EFFECTS ON RELATIONS WITH
USG. OTHER LOWER-LEVEL DECISIONS ARE SOMETIMES MADE ON THE ASSUMPTION
(DERIVED IN PART FROM TONE OF MEDIA) THAT IN PRESENT LEFTIST
ATMOSPHERE IT IS SAFER TO VETO OR OBSTRUCT U.S. PROGRAMS THAN
TO APPROVE THEM. STILL OTHER ADVERSE ACTIONS ARE TAKEN BY SOME
ETHIOPIANS WHO ARE SOLIDLY IN SOVIET CAMP (PERHAPS AS PAID AGENTS)
AND ACTIVELY WORK TO DAMAGE US-EPMG RELATIONS. MISSION'S DUTY IS
TO ENSURE THAT APPROPRIATE HIGH LEVELS OF EPMG (A) ARE AWARE
WHAT SUBORDINATES ARE DOING, AND (B) CONSIDER CONSEQUENCES.

4. NORMAL DIPLOMATIC LANGUAGE DOES NOT PRODUCE DESIRED EFFECTS ON
HARD-NOSED ETHIOPIANS. BLUNTNESS IS ESSENTIAL, INCLUDING HARSH
QUESTIONS ("HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR ANNOUNCED POLICY OF NON-
ALIGNMENT?" AND "WHY ARE YOU UNWILLING TO STATE PUBLICLY WHAT
YOU SAY PRIVATELY ABOUT YOUR DESIRE FOR CONTINUED FRIENDLY RELATIONS
WITH USG?"). HOWEVER IT IS IMPORTANT TO AVOID THREATS OF CESSATION
OF U.S. ASSISTANCE, AND TO USE INSTEAD THE FORMULA: "BILATERAL
RELATIONS ARE BOUND TO BE AFFECTED." AN ESPECIALLY DISTASTEFUL
CHARACTERISTIC OF EPMG IS ITS READINESS TO TELL FLAT LIES WHEN
PRESSED ABOUT SITUATIONS IT DOES NOT WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE.
HEAD OF STATE AND OTHERS HAVE LIED TO ME DIRECTLY, DENYING
ANY DISCUSSION IN DIRG OF EXECUTING POLITICAL PRISONERS, DENYING
ANY EPMG PLANS OR ACTIONS TO PREPARE FOR "RED MARCH" IN ERITREA,
DENYING ANY GOVT DIRECTIVES PROMOTING ANTI-US HOSTILITY IN MEDIA
OR CURTAILING TTAVEL TO U.S. THE DENIALS ARE NOT REALLY MEANT
TO BE BELIEVED BUT ARE INSTEAD A MEANS OF CURTAILING DISCUSSION
OF SUBJECTS THEY DO NOT WISH TO EXPLAIN. ALL I CAN THINK OF TO
DO IS SUCH SITUATIONS IS TO INDICATE POLITE SCEPTICISM, AND WHERE
APPROPRIATE, AS ON MEDIA HOSTILITY, POINT OUT THAT LOWER LEVEL
OFFICIALS ARE NOT FOLLOWING EXPRESSED EPMG POLICY OF FRIENDSHIP
WITH U.S. AND SHOULD BE MADE TO CHANGE MEDIA SLANT.

5. WE HAVE HERETOFORE HELD VERY CLOSELY OUR HIGH LEVEL
REMONSTRANCES. I NOW THINK IT IS NECESSARY TO LET A LARGE NUMBER OF
EPMG OFFICIALS KNOW OF OUR COMPLAINTS. W HAVE GOOD EVIDENCE THAT
USG DISSATISFACTIONS ARE CLOSELY HELD WITHIN DIRG AND AMONG
MINISTERS. FACT THAT CHIEF OF MISSION HAS COMPLAINED STRONGLY
TO DIRG ABOUT BILATERAL PROBLEMS IS TOO OFTEN UNKNOWN TO IMPORTANT
GOVT OFFICIALS BECAUSE TOP DIRG MEMBERS ARE AFRAID OF STIMULATING
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INTERNAL CRITICISMS OF THEIR PAST ACTIONS. EMBASSY SHOULD CAREFULLY
AND PRIVATELY SPREAD WORD TO SELECTED OFFICIALS AFTER EACH SUCH
DEMARCHE.

6. ANOTHER UNDIPLOMATIC BUT NECESSARY ACTIVITY IS TO GIVE WARNINGS
TO EPMG CONCERNING CERTAIN DRASTIC AND DESTRUCTIVE ACTIONS THAT
INTELL REPORTS INDICATE DIRG IS CONTEMPLATING. EMBASSY SUGGESTED AND
GOTTEN DEPT APPROVAL FOR SEVERAL SUCH "DON'T STICK BEANS UP

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YOUR NOSE" DEMARCHES INCLUDING: PROPOSED EXECUTION OF
POLITICAL PRISONERS, PLANS FOR "RED MARCH" ON ERITREA, AND IDEAS
FOR PREEMPTIVE ATTACK ON SOMALIA. EMBASSY AND DEPT SHOULD CONTINUE
TO BE ALERT TO SITUATIONS THAT REQUIRE SUCH WARNINGS, BEFORE THE
EVENTS OCCUR.

7. EMBASSY AND DEPT NEED CONTINUING VIGILANCE TO ENSURE THAT
USG ELEMENTS, IN EMBASSY AND IN WASHINGTON. DO NOT OVERREACT OR
PREMATURELY REACT AGAINST UNPALATABLE EPMG ACTIONS. IT IS TEMPTING
TO SOME TO ASSUME THAT EPMG ACTIONS AGAINST USG INTERESTS, OR THAT AR
E
DESTRUCTIVE TO USG PROGRAMS, ARE DELIBERATELY CONSIDERED POLICY ACTS
THAT WILL CONTINUE AND INTENSIFY. FROM SUCH ASSUMPTIONS IT IS POSSIBLE

TO BUILD SCENARIOS THAT REQUIRE IMMEDIATE USG RETALIATION OR DISENGAG
E-
MENT. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT WE CANNOT IGNORE PRESISTENT EPMG
INATTENTION TO PROBLEMS IMPORTANT TO USG, AND/OR ACTIONS DESTRUCTIVE
TO USG PROBRAMS, AND THAT SOMETIMES U.S. COUNTER-REACTION IS NECESSAR
Y.
HOWEVER, UNDERSTANDABLE IRRITATION AND DISCOURAGEMENT AMONG USG
ELEMENTS AS PET PROGRAMS ARE CURTAILED OR RESHAPED BY EPMG DECISIONS
CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO OVERRIDE LONGER-TERM POLICY CONSIDERATIONS. I
HOPE THAT NSSM DELIBERATIONS NOW GOING ON IN WASHINGTON WILL PRODUCE
WRITTEN POLICY GUIDELINES THAT WILL EMPHASIZE HIGH PRIORITY OF
HANGING IN HERE AS LONG AS WE DECENTLY CAN, LIMITING DAMAGE BY
REPEATING REPRESENTATIONS OF USG POINT OF VIEW, AND CONTINUING
THE PRESENT POLICY OF STEADINESS.

8. THE TIME MAY COME WHEN OVERALL US-EMPG RELATIONS ARE SO
INTOLERABLE POOR THAT SHARP USG RETALIATION IS REQUIRED. PERHAPS
INHUMANE ACTIONS AGAINST LOCAL CITIZENS, OR MILITARY ATTACKS
AGAINST ETHIOPIA'S NEIGHBORS, COULD REQUIRE A FULL-SCALE RE-
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ASSESSMENT OF U.S. POLICIES AND PROGRAMS. UNTIL SUCH EVENTS
OCCUR IT WOULD BE WRONG TO CHANGE PRESENT U.S. POLICIES. I FOR
ONE BELIEVE THAT HOWEVER IRRATIONAL AND PRO-COMMUNIST THE EPMG
MAY APPEAR AT PRESENT, IT IS NOT SUICIDAL AND IT WILL FACE UP TO
HARD FACTS. ONE SUCH FACT THAT IS GETTING INCREASING EPMG ATTENTION
IS THAT BOTH SOVIET BLOC AND PRC ARE FAILING TO SUPPLY INPUTS
(MILITARY AND ECONOMIC) ANYWHERE NEAR THE MAGNITUDE OF THOSE
FROM THE WEST. EVERY EDUCATED ETHIOPIAN, WHETHER LEFT-IDEOLOGUE
OR MODERATE, UNDERSTANDS THAT VERY LARGE FOREIGN INPUTS ARE
REQUIRED JUST FOR SURVIVAL, LET ALONE FOR DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESS.
HAVING DEMONSTRABLY FAILED TO GET THOSE INPUTS FROM SOCIALIST
FRIENDS, THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THEY WILL CONCLUDE THAT A MORE
GENUINE, AND MORE TOLERABLE, NON-ALIGMENT IS NECESSARY FOR ETHIOPIA.
HUMMEL

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